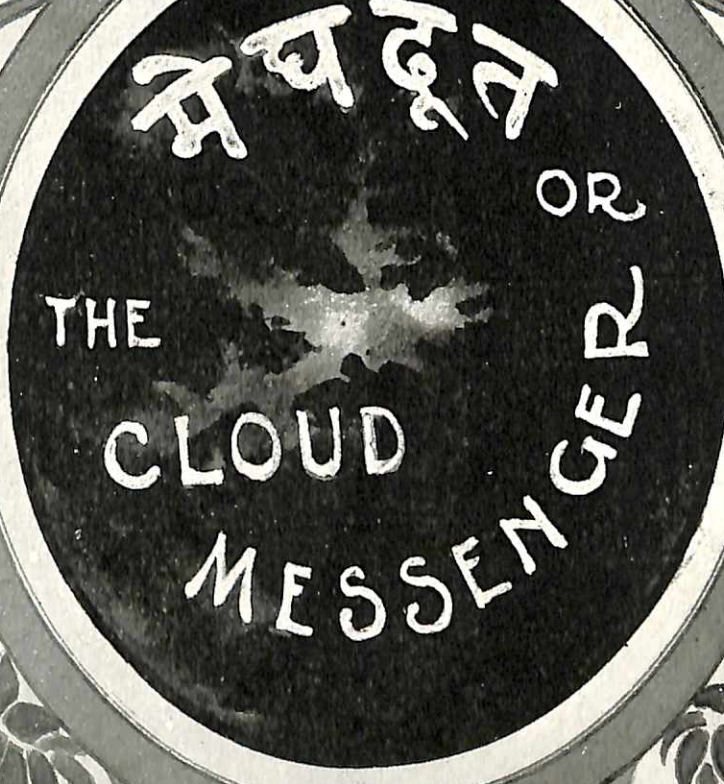
KALIDASA.



BY
Purshotam Vishram Mawjee
J.P., M.R.A.S.
ILLUSTRATED BY
M. V. DHURANDHAR

KALIDAS, the great *Sanskrit* poet of India, has been called by Western *Sanskrit* Scholars, the Shakespeare of India. He flourished at the Court of the king of Ujjain, was a devoted worshipper of *Shiva* and *Paravati*, and a great observer and ardent lover of Nature.

Meghaduta–The Cloud Messenger is the foremost of the poems that have been composed in the *Sanskrit* language. Short as it is, it transcends every other poem in its completeness, its simplicity of plot and its exact description of the softer and nobler sentiments. As regards poetic imagery, grandeur of description, pathos and felicity of expression, *Meghaduta* has no equal in the whole range of *Sanskrit* literature. The style is flowing, vivid and forcible, and the descriptions are true to nature possessing peculiar sweetness.

The plot of *Meghaduta*—The Cloud Messenger is simple but interesting. A certain *Yaksha* or demigod was so devoted to his wife that he neglected his ordinary duties and incurred the displeasure of his king "*Kuber*" (the God of Wealth) who ordered him into exile in the *Ramgiri* forests for one year. Separated from his wife the love-stricken *Yaksha* became extremely anxious to send some news of himself to her. Having observed a passing rain-cloud and quite forgetting

that it was merely an inanimate collection of vapour, lightning, water and wind, he considerd it to be a proper messenger to carry his cheering words to his forlorn wife. He worshipped the cloud with fresh flowers and greeted it with words of affection, finally requesting it to carry his message to his wife. The message contains a graphic description of the scenery and places to be seen on the way. He gives a birds-eye-view of the town of *Alakā* where his wife was waiting and pining for him. He gives it the particulars of the town and of his wife, vividly describing the mode of her living. He encourages the cloud to undertake the journey with the prospect of being pleasantly greeted on the way. The cloud is supposed to have complied with his request and undertaken the journey. It reaches in good time, recognises the abode of *Yaksha*, and in divine words communicates the love message which cheers her saddened heart. *Kuber*, the king of the *Yakshās* heard the message delivered and his heart being melted with pity he recalled the exile. Thus the loving couple are united and freed from the sorrow of separation. They lived in constant happiness ever after.

The hermitage on the Ramagiri Hill.

WHERE *Ramagiri's* shadowy woods extends
And those pure streams where *Sita* bathed, descend,
Spoiled of his glories, severed from his wife,
A banished *Yaksha* passed his lonely life;
Doomed by KUVERA'S anger to sustain,
Twelve tedious months of solitude and pain.
To these drear hills through circling days confined,
In dull unvaried grief, the God repined;

Welcoming the cloud.

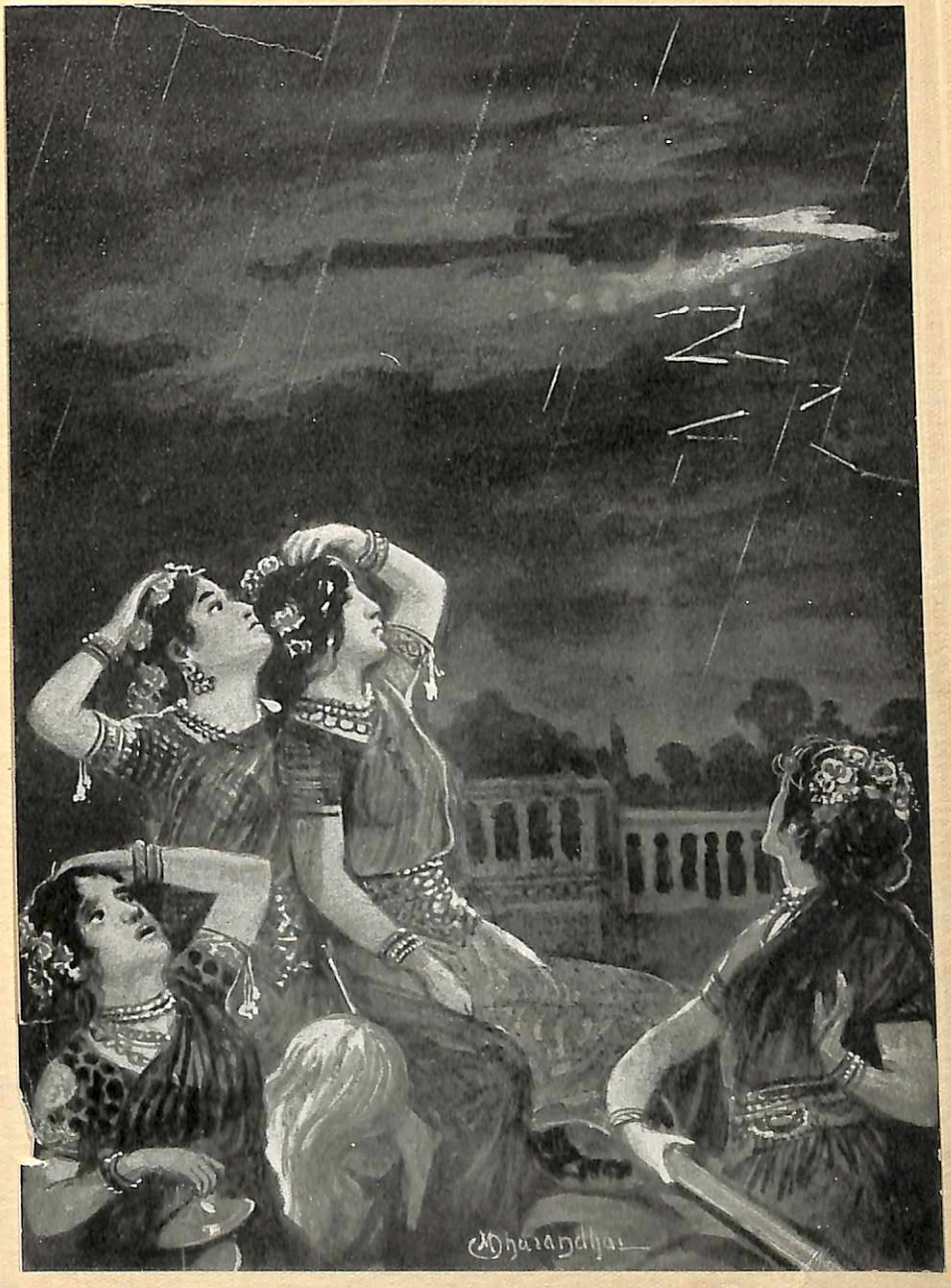
WHAT hope alas was his! yet fancy found,
Some solace in the glooms that deepened round,
And bade him hail amidst the labouring air,
A friendly envoy to his distant fair:
Who charged with grateful tidings might impart,
New life and pleasure, to her drooping heart.
Cheered with the thought he culled each budding flower,

Yonng woman at her toilet.

HERE should thy spirit with thy toils decay,
Rest from the labors of the wearying way,
Round every house the flowery fragrance spreads;
Oe'r every floor the painted footstep treads;
Breathed through each casement, swell the scented air
Soft odors shaken from dishevelled hair;
Pleased on each terrace dancing with delight,
The friendly Peacock hails thy grateful flight:

A look at the dancing girls.

'THEY who with burning feet, and aching
arms,
With wanton gestures, and emblazoned
charms,
In MAHADEVA'S fame the measure tread,
Or wave the gorgeous chowrie o'er his head;
Shall turn on thee the grateful-speaking eye,
Whose glances glean like bees along the sky,
As from thy presence, showers benign and
sweet,
Cool the parched earth, and soothe their
tender feet.



Yaksha's abode.

A golden column on a crystal base,
Begirt with jewels rises o'er the place;
Here when the evening twilight shades the skies,
The blue necked Peacock to the summit flies,
And moves in graceful circles to tone,
My fair awakens from her tinkling zone.

The play garden of the maids.

THERE when the sun restores the rising day,
What deeds of love his tell-tale beams
display;
The withered garlands on the pathway
found,
The faded lotus prostrate on the ground.
The pearls that bursting zones have taught
to roam,
Speak of fond maids and wanderers from
home.

Yakshas drinking.

THUS graced they woo the *Yakshas* to their arms,
And gems and wine, and music, aid their charms
The strains divine with art celestial thrill,
And wines from grapes of heavenly growth distill;
The gems bestrew each terrace of delight,
Like stars that glitter through the shades of night.

The town of Alaka.

THY goal behold, where *Ganga's* winding rill,
Skirts like a costly train the sacred hill;
Where brilliant pearls descend in lucid showers,
And Clouds like tresses, clothe her lofty towers.
There every palace with thy glory vies.
Whose soaring summits kiss the lofty skies;

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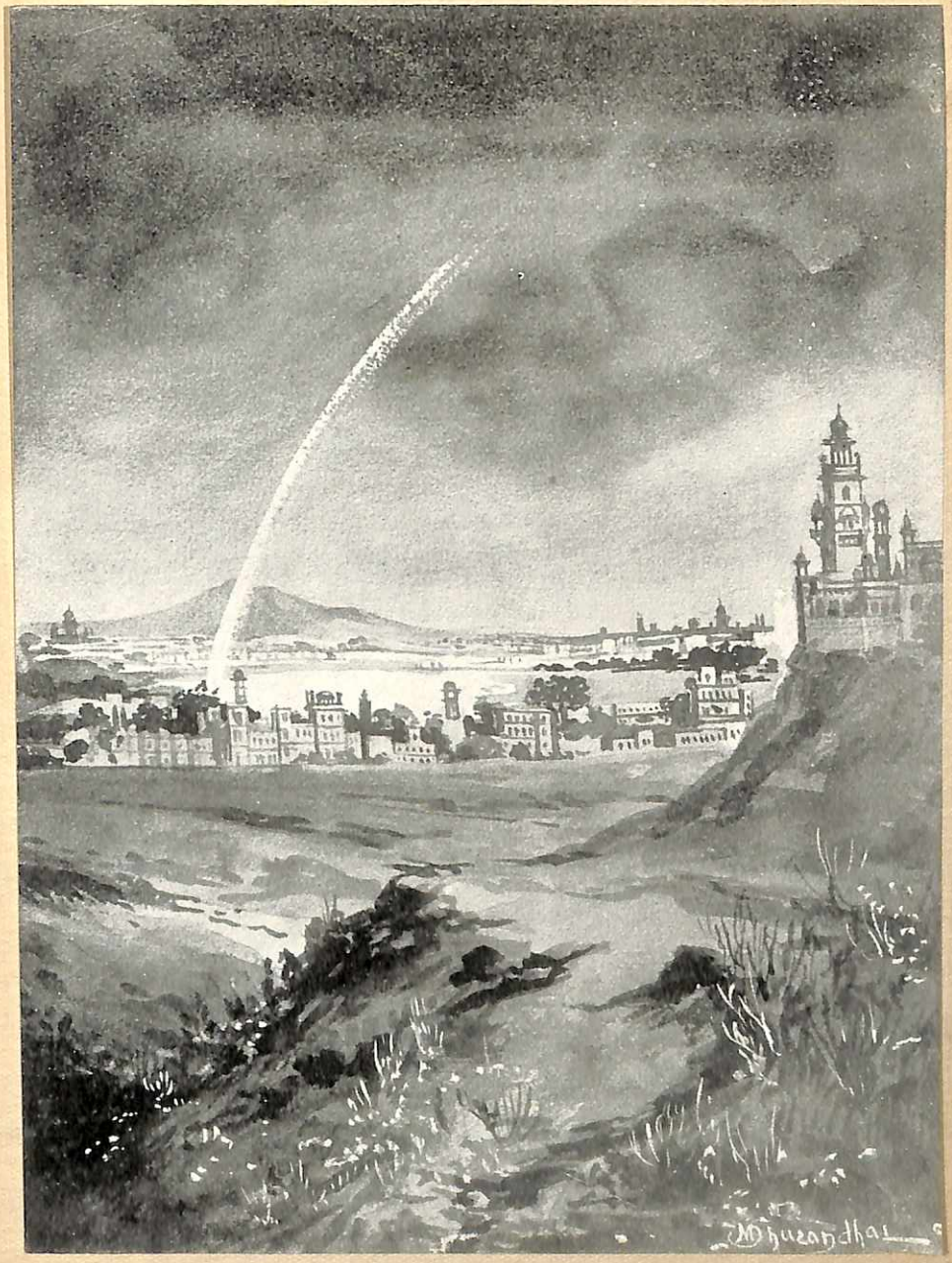
And Clouds like rain, in sparkling diamonds falls.

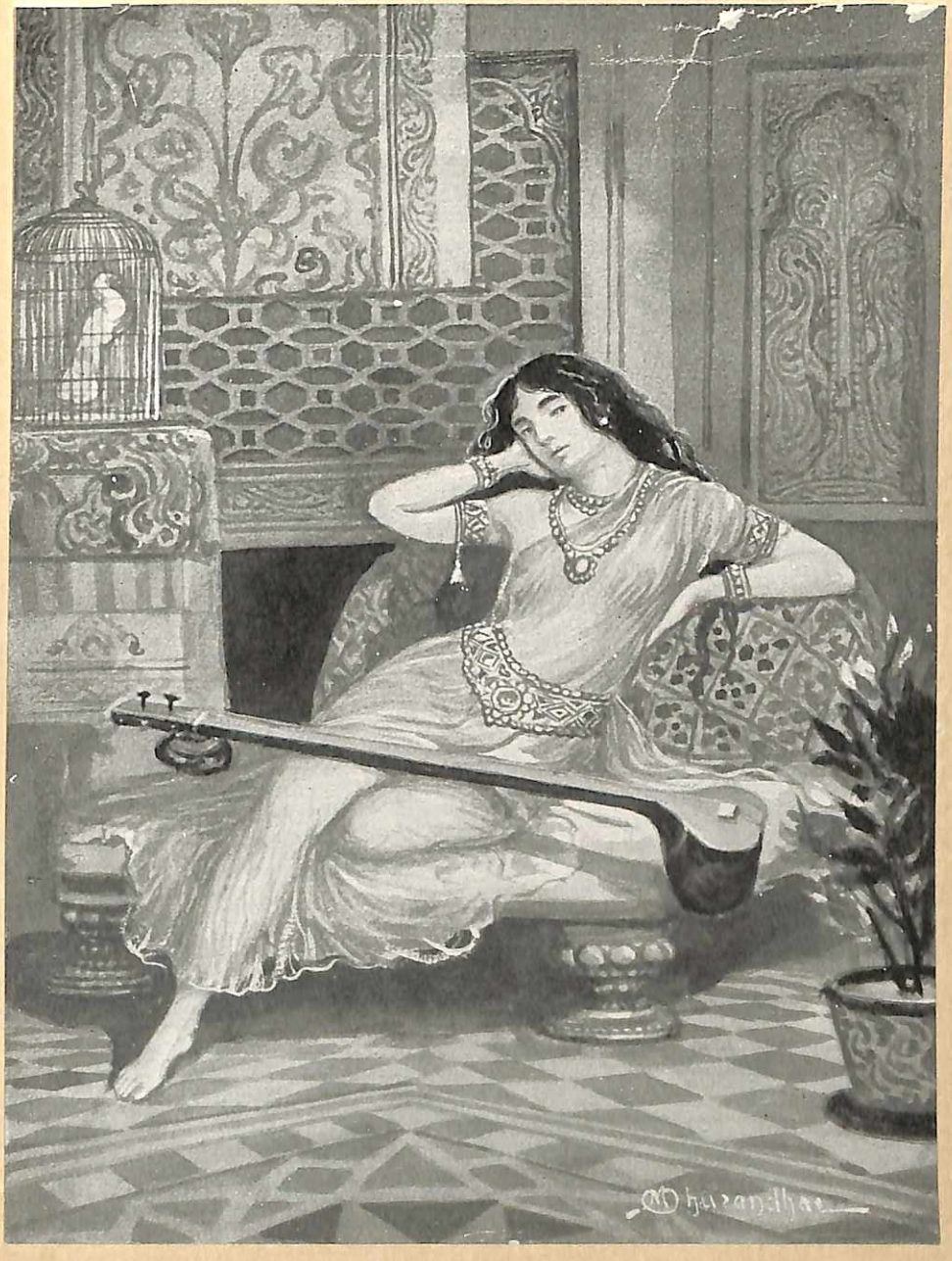


Yaksha's wife painting the likeness of her husband.

I mark her now, with fancy's aid retrace,
This wasted figure, and this haggard face.
Now from her favorite bird she seeks relief,
And tells the tuneful *Sarica* her grief,
Mourns o'er the feathered prisoner's kindred fate
And fondly questions of it's absent mate.

Forgetfulndss on account of separation.

In vain the lute for harmony is strung,
And round the robe-neglected shoulder slung;
And faltering accents strive to catch in vain,
Our race's old commemorative strain;
The falling tear that from reflection springs,
Corrodes incessantly the silvery strings;
Recurring woe still pressing on the heart,
The skilful hand forgets its grateful art,
And idly wandering strikes no measured tone,
But wakes a sad wild warbling of its own.



Pining from love,

THOSE charms that glittering ornaments
oppress,
Those restless slumbers that proclaim
distress,
That slender figure worn by grief severe,
Shall surely gain thy sympathizing tear;
For the soft breast is swift to overflow,
In moist compassion, at the claims of woe.